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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of	:	
Keene	:	DECISION
Application No. 10/623,936	:	
Filing Date: 21 July, 2003	:	
Attorney Docket No.: 5-904	:	

This is a revised decision on the petition filed on 15 March, 2006, requesting withdrawal of the holding of abandonment under 37 C.F.R. §1.181.

For the reasons set forth below, the petition as considered under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 is **DISMISSED**.

NOTES:

(1) Any petition (and fee) for reconsideration of this decision must be submitted within two (2) months from the mail date of this decision. Extensions of time under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) are permitted. The reconsideration request should include a cover letter entitled "Renewed Petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.181."

(It is noted, however, that Petitioner may be unable to present a satisfactory showing to support a petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.181, and Petitioner's only alternative will be to file a petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b).)

(2) Thereafter, there will be no further reconsideration of this matter.

BACKGROUND

The record reflects that:

- Petitioner failed to reply timely and properly to the final Office action mailed on 28 June, 2005, with reply due absent an extension of time on or before 28 September, 2005;
- the application went abandoned after midnight 28 September, 2005;
- the Office mailed the Notice of Abandonment on 2 February, 2006;
- on 18 March, 2005, Petitioner filed the instant petition, with only an averment that Petitioner timely filed the reply in question and copies of the papers averred to have been timely filed—Petitioner appears to have ignored the requirements set forth at MPEP §711.03(c) regarding matters such as this.

Moreover, proper monitoring of the status of one's applications on Private PAIR will inform one's management of application responses and provide one an indication when mailings of Office actions should be expected.

STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Congress has authorized the Commissioner to "revive an application if the delay is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to have been "unavoidable." 35 U.S.C. §133 (1994).¹

The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) and (b) set forth the requirements for a petitioner to revive a previously unavoidably or unintentionally, respectively, abandoned application under this congressional grant of authority. The language of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) is clear, unambiguous, and without qualification: the delay in tendering the reply to the outstanding Office action, as well as filing the first petition seeking revival, must have been unavoidable for the reply now to be accepted on petition.²

¹ 35 U.S.C. §133 provides:

35 U.S.C. §133 Time for prosecuting application.

Upon failure of the applicant to prosecute the application within six months after any action therein, of which notice has been given or mailed to the applicant, or within such shorter time, not less than thirty days, as fixed by the Commissioner in such action, the application shall be regarded as abandoned by the parties thereto, unless it be shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that such delay was unavoidable.

² Therefore, by example, an unavoidable delay in the payment of the Filing Fee might occur if a reply is shipped by the US Postal Service, but due to catastrophic accident, the delivery is not made.

Delays in responding properly raise the question whether delays are unavoidable.³ Where there is a question whether the delay was unavoidable, Petitioners must meet the burden of establishing that the delay was unavoidable within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a).⁴ And the Petitioner must be diligent in attending to the matter.⁵ Failure to do so does not constitute the care required under Pratt, and so cannot satisfy the test for diligence and due care.

(By contrast, unintentional delays are those that do not satisfy the very strict statutory and regulatory requirements of unavoidable delay, and also, by definition, are not intentional.⁶)

Allegations as to the Request to
Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment

The courts have determined the construct for properly supporting a petition seeking withdrawal of a holding of abandonment.⁷

The commentary at MPEP §711.03(c) provides:

* * *

**B. Petition To Withdraw Holding of Abandonment Based on
Evidence That a Reply Was Timely Mailed or Filed**

37 C.F.R. §1.10(c) through §1.10(e) and §1.10(g) set forth procedures for petitioning the Director of the USPTO to accord a filing date to correspondence as of the date of deposit of the correspondence as “Express Mail.” A petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment relying upon a timely reply placed in “Express Mail” must include an appropriate petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.10(c), (d), * (e), or (g) (see MPEP § 513). When a paper is shown to have been mailed to the Office using the “Express Mail” procedures, the paper must be entered in PALM with the “Express Mail” date.

³ See: *Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure; Final Rule Notice*, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53158-59 (October 10, 1997), 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 86-87 (October 21, 1997).

⁴ See: In re Application of G, 11 USPQ2d 1378, 1380 (Comm'r Pats. 1989).

⁵ See: Diligence in Filing Petitions to Revive and Petitions to Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment, 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 33 (March 19, 1991). It was and is Petitioner's burden to exercise diligence in seeking either to have the holding of abandonment withdrawn or the application revived. See 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office supra.

⁶ Therefore, by example, an unintentional delay in the reply might occur if the reply and transmittal form are to be prepared for shipment by the US Postal Service, but other pressing matters distract one's attention and the mail is not timely deposited for shipment.

⁷ See: Delgar v. Schulyer, 172 USPQ 513 (D.D.C. 1971).

Similarly, applicants may establish that a reply was filed with a postcard receipt that properly identifies the reply and provides *prima facie* evidence that the reply was timely filed. See MPEP § 503. For example, if the application has been held abandoned for failure to file a reply to a first Office action, and applicant has a postcard receipt showing that an amendment was timely filed in response to the Office action, then the holding of abandonment should be withdrawn upon the filing of a petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment. When the reply is shown to have been timely filed based on a postcard receipt, the reply must be entered into PALM using the date of receipt of the reply as shown on the post card receipt.

Where a certificate of mailing under 37 C.F.R. §1.8, but not a postcard receipt, is relied upon in a petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment, see 37 C.F.R. §1.8(b) and MPEP § 512. As stated in 37 C.F.R. §1.8(b)(3) the statement that attests to the previous timely mailing or transmission of the correspondence must be on a personal knowledge basis, or to the satisfaction of the Director of the USPTO. If the statement attesting to the previous timely mailing is not made by the person who signed the Certificate of Mailing (i.e., there is no personal knowledge basis), then the statement attesting to the previous timely mailing should include evidence that supports the conclusion that the correspondence was actually mailed (e.g., copies of a mailing log establishing that correspondence was mailed for that application). When the correspondence is shown to have been timely filed based on a certificate of mailing, the correspondence is entered into PALM with the actual date of receipt (i.e., the date that the duplicate copy of the papers was filed with the statement under 37 C.F.R. §1.8).

37 C.F.R. §1.8(b) also permits applicant to notify the Office of a previous mailing or transmission of correspondence and submit a statement under 37 C.F.R. 1.8(b)(3) accompanied by a duplicate copy of the correspondence when a reasonable amount of time (e.g., more than one month) has elapsed from the time of mailing or transmitting of the correspondence. Applicant does not have to wait until the application becomes abandoned before notifying the Office of the previous mailing or transmission of the correspondence. Applicant should check the private Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system for the status of

the correspondence before notifying the Office. See MPEP § 512.

* * *

Thus, Petitioner appears not to have satisfied the showing requirements described above.

CONCLUSION

Because Petitioner has not satisfied the burdens set forth in Delgar v. Schulyer, the petition as considered under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 hereby is dismissed.

ALTERNATIVE VENUE

Petitioner's only alternative to irretrievable abandonment may be a petition alleging unintentional delay under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b).⁸

Petitioner may wish to file such a petition to the Commissioner requesting revival of an application abandoned due to unintentional delay. (See:
http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/mpep/documents/0700_711_03_c.htm#sect711.03c)

A petition to revive on the grounds of unintentional delay must be filed promptly and such petition must be accompanied by the reply (the amendment), the petition fee, and a statement that "the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition was unintentional." (The statement is in the form available online.)

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:⁹

By mail: Commissioner for Patents¹⁰
 P.O. Box 1450
 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

By FAX: IFW Formal Filings
 (571) 273-8300
 ATTN.: Office of Petitions

⁸ The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.183 sets forth that waiver of the rules is "subject to such other requirements as may be imposed."

⁹ On July 15, 2005, the Central Facsimile (FAX) Number changed to (571) 273-8300. The old FAX number no longer is in service and (571) 273-8300 will be the only facsimile number recognized for centralized delivery. (For further information, see:
<http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/dapp/ola/preognitice/cfax062005.pdf>.)

¹⁰ To determine the appropriate addresses for other subject-specific correspondence, refer to the USPTO Web site at www.uspto.gov.

- By hand: Mail Stop: Petition
Customer Service Window
Randolph Building
401 Dulany Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Telephone inquiries concerning this decision may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3214.



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